FLYING EVANGELIST

(Photos: Courtesy, the Right Rev. D.N. Shearman)

I still remember the day when I sat in the office of the Federal Secretary, and he asked me, as a student soon to be commissioned, "How would you feel about being posted to the Parish of Forbes, in the Central West of New South Wales?" "It sounds great," was my reply.

December 1974, Lyn(my wife), Anthony(our son, then 7 years of age) and I moved from the Illawarra District, to begin what was to be a great adventure with God.

Life as a parish evangelist is very hectic and filled with many opportunities for sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ.

THE MIRACLE OF TRAINING: An air pageant was held in Forbes during October, 1975, and we attended it. We met friends from the Illawarra who were in Forbes on holiday. While talking with them both Lyn and I felt that I should learn to fly.

I made enquiries about the cost of training etc. and then we prayed about the matter, asking for directions from God. He led us to make application to withdraw $1,600 from money we had invested in a *fixed* deposit following the sale of our home in Wollongong. We did this and an incredible thing happened. Normally, the money could not be withdrawn before maturity. However, a reply (in the affirmative) came from the company just two days after our letter had been posted! We accepted this as a definite sign from God to go ahead with the training.

When I reached restricted flying status, I was ready to advance into unrestricted standard. This meant flying in an aircraft costing $38 per hour to hire. Two wonderful blessings then happened within weeks of each other. The first was a messenger-delivered letter containing a telegram, "Keep flying, keep safe. Biggles.", and a cheque for $500. Secondly, a pilot friend purchased in my name a share in an aircraft (a share costs $1,200). As a share-holder, the hiring rate of the aircraft is reduced from $38 to $24 per hour. These wonderful gifts made it possible for me to complete my training.

When all was completed, I took stock of costs incurred. These included text books, navigation equipment, charts and flying, including aircraft hire and instructors. It came to $2,102.11. With the original $1,600.00 plus the gifts of $500.00 and the reduced flying costs, the budget was exceeded by only $2.11 - a miracle, I am sure you will agree!

VH - IXK, A GIFT FROM GOD: The Parish of Forbes has been very generous in allowing me to conduct missions and Church Army deputations outside the Parish on a regular basis. Sometimes travelling involved is as much as 1,000 kilometres for the round trip. I have found since living in the west that a lot of travelling is done in light aircraft, which is often far better, faster and safer than by car.

More and more I could see the potential of an aircraft being used in the Church Army's ministry of evangelism, to reach people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, whether they be in large cities or in remote and isolated areas.

Realising the great cost of airplanes, I found myself thinking in terms of second-hand and fairly cheap aircraft as the only avenue open to us.

The day my pilot's licence arrived from the Department of Transport, my

Filling .....

..... and loading the new aircraft.

first copy of the Aircraft Owners' and Pilots' Association magazine also arrived. As I read through the long lists of second-hand aircraft I was strongly prompted by the words of the Lord Jesus who said, "Behold, I make all things new" (Rev. 21:5). This greatly excited me as I thought about a new aircraft, but knowing all the while that only a miracle from God could make it a reality.

Then I saw it. Near the back of the A.O.P.A. magazine was a full page advertisement for a new model Cessna 172 - 100 soon to be released in Australia. I knew that this was the one, and I was immediately reminded that a few months before, Lyn had shown me a picture of a 1976 model Cessna 172 saying, "This is the sort of aircraft that you are going to have for the Lord's work." She was right. Only now the 1977 model had so much more to offer.

I had not even put the magazine down when a knock came at the back door. It was a pilot friend, and I asked if he had seen the new Cessnas. He said "No, but I would like to." I showed him the advertisement and then after a few minutes he went away.

Still thinking about the new airplane, I called Rex Aviation in Sydney on the telephone and asked them to send me all available literature about the new Cessnas. When the brochures arrived, the same pilot friend also called back to see me. He asked me, "Did you buy that new plane?" I said, "No, but I have information about it from Sydney." Then as we talked together, this friend told me that the Lord had asked him to supply a new Cessna 172 - 100 to be used by me in the work of taking the Gospel to people wherever God required.

The Lord had provided me with faith sufficient to secure one of these tremendous aircraft, which is now a reality and bears the Registration VH-IXK (Iesou - JESUS; Xriotou - CHRIST; Kierios - LORD).

THE VISION DEVELOPS: So far this year we have been involved in six missions and special weekends away from the Parish. The invitations came from Bourke, Nyngan (twice), West Dubbo, Coolah and Gilgandra (where the Federal Secretary joined me for a weekend richly blessed of God).

My wife is able to join with me from time to time on mission work, which is really wonderful. By using the aircraft, we often save one whole day of being away from home.

We are looking to God concerning the future of the "flying evangelist" ministry, which we know will "take off" soon.

IN CONCLUSION, WE BELIEVE THAT THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST MUST BE PROCLAIMED ALL OVER THIS GREAT LAND OF OURS AND IF AN AIRCRAFT CAN BETTER ACHIEVE THIS, THEN WE MUST USE ONE.

Captain Kevin Cullen

An R.A.A.F. Hercules.

All photos on cover and pages 3 and 4: Courtesy of Qantas.

of equipment costing more than the Avro 504K while working on a jumbo jet worth more than $40 million. It is interesting to observe the meticulous care taken by workmen who have worked on planes of many types during their years of service. Continual training and learning have been essential, for the safety and lives of those who fly are in their hands. This concern for others provides an inspiration for me in my work.

Like the workers I have had my "ups - and - downs"! I was invited on a five-hour test flight with the crew of a R.A.A.F. Hercules that had had a major overhaul. The thrill of the flight and the exhaustive tests proved too much for my inner man and towards the end my stomach "bombed-out", causing a minor "upheaval" on the flight. The reader can imagine the humorous comments concerning the "sky pilot" who could not stomach things when getting closer to his Captain.

Sometimes, in life, things might seem difficult to "stomach" or face, but my work has taught me to face difficulties with trust in the Lord. As the Qantas personnel continually face the challenge of the present and the future, so must I. During a sermon, the illustration was used where a sole passenger was in a small plane flying in dense cloud. The pilot had left the cabin door open and the two could converse. When asked how the plane was guided in such weather, the pilot drew the passenger's attention to a series of tapping sounds. This was the beam from the airport which provided the guide. The pilot deliberately left the beam and the sound disappeared. Naturally he did not stray far and soon returned to the beam that brought the plane safely to its destination. This story serves me as a guiding beam as I carry on my industrial chaplaincy.

I MUST CONTINUALLY ENDEAVOUR TO LEAD PEOPLE ONTO THE RIGHT BEAM - OUR BEAM BEING OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST WHO IS SURELY THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

FRIDAY

THE TRAINING COLLEGE:

The Principal, The Rev. G.L. MacRobb, Mrs. MacRobb, Michael & Katrina.

All Lecturers.

Candidates' Committee and our need of suitable candidates.

Second Year Students: Lynette Russell, Barbara Leatham(N.Z.), Wendy Woods(N.Z.)

First Year Students: Wendy Ferguson, Mark Rogers, Len Taylor (N.Z.).

* *

Points and Prayers

In your prayers, please -

GIVE THANKS FOR: * The commitment of people's lives to Christ through the ministry of evangelism.

* Those who have applied to enter our College next year, and those who have made enquiries about service in the Church Army.

PRAY FOR: * Our Staff Conference to be held 21 - 28 January, 1978. Pray for plans and preparations; for Bishop D.N. Shearman, the Chaplain and Study Leader.

* The work of the College & Candidates' Committee; their discussions and decisions concerning the management and welfare of the College, and their responsibility involved in the selection of candidates for training.

* A Parish Mission to be held in November(6-13), in the comparatively new Canberra suburbs of Kambah and Wanniassa. Pray for the team of about eleven; for the clergy(the Rev. Dean Barker & the Rev. John Mason) & their people.

A PRAYER FOR THE CHURCH ARMY:

Bless, O Lord, the work of the Church Army, to the conversion of sinners and the strengthening of the faithful. Endue its workers with the power of Your Holy Spirit, that they may witness faithfully, courageously and consistently to the principles of Your Gospel and the faith of Your Church - for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

"I WOULD LIKE TO RISE VERY HIGH

I would like to rise very high, Lord,
Above my city
Above the world
Above time.
I would like to purify my glance and
borrow your eyes.

I would then see the universe, humanity, history, as the Father sees them .....

I would see the beautiful, the
eternal thought of your Father's
love taking form step by step,
Everything summed up in you, things
on earth and things in heaven.

And I would see that today, like
yesterday, the most minute
details are part of it.
Every man in his place.
Every group
And every object.
I would see a factory, a theatre,
collective bargaining and the
construction of a fountain .....

I would see the tiniest particle of
matter and the smallest
throbbing of life,
Love and hate,
Sin and grace.
Startled, I would understand that
the great adventure of love,
which started at the beginning
of the world, is unfolding
before me ....."

(From Michel Quoist's book - "Prayers of Life" - one of his titles available from the Church Army Bookshops - see page 12.)

EDITORIAL -

"Pull over, driver."

The Highway Patrol car, which had recently overtaken me, had pulled to the side of the road, and its driver was signalling for me to do the same. A quick glance at the 'speedo' indicated that I was not exceeding the speed limit - so ... what was wrong? I wondered.

The police officer examined my driver's licence very thoroughly, at the same time telling me that a car like the one I was driving had been stolen the night before in a nearby town. He quizzed me about the ownership of the car, and eventually said -

"Okay, you can go now. You don't look like the stealing type."

THE STEALING TYPE! *Just what, I wondered, would I look like to fit his idea of "the stealing type"?*

How easily we all put people into categories! And, in doing so; how we restrict them, refusing them the freedom to reach their possible potential as full, worthwhile and creative human beings.

When we consider the characters who met up with Christ in His ministry - Zacchaeus, Mary Magdalene, the Samaritan woman at the well, and even some of the Disciples - what a tragedy if He had merely analysed them without seeing them as transformed people, living "life in all its fulness", because of His forgiveness, His love and His power.

And what a tragedy if we only view people from a "human' stand point, without seeing them with the eyes of Christ.

* *

Can't keep a good man down

As mentioned in the last "Pioneer", a visit to the Toowoomba area was a part of the 43rd Birthday activities. A team of four travelled there for a busy weekend of speaking engagements and meeting people (20 services, a youth tea, an afternoon tea meeting and a special dinner meeting with clergy and their wives).

The man behind the planning was the Rev. Canon R.F. Kirby, retired and living in Toowoomba. He and his wife were a tangible link with earlier Church Army days in England, where they were both C.A. Officers and worked with the "Chief" and Founder, Prebendary Wilson Carlile.

Canon Kirby had included himself in the "Birthday team", for an address at a morning service. Unfortunately, he became the victim of a sore throat, and, by Sunday morning, could barely whisper. However, good trooper that he is, he went ahead by whispering his address to another person, who relayed it to the congregation!

And that's not all! At the combined service on the Sunday evening, joining in with the singing was not really for Canon Kirby. So he played his viola alongside the organ to accompany the community singing.

A practical lesson for us of the Church Army's unofficial motto -

"READY FOR ANYTHING !"

MANAGEMENT TRAINING

A SMALL NUMBER OF CLERGY can be included with our students and some Officers in a special Course at the end of this year.

The College of Evangelism has recently included an extensive three day Management Training Course as part of our curriculum. This will be conducted by staff members of the Lay Institute for Evangelism at our College on November 22nd - 24th. It will encompass most areas of management discipline relating to ministry (including self-management). We are hoping that a number of our Officers in the field can join us for the Course.

Overnight accommodation at the College for several country clergy during the Course may also be available - by arrangement.

BREAK OUT AND BE THE CHURCH!

was the theme of a fast-moving leadership development weekend held in August for the Diocese of Bathurst. The training team consisted of Sister Lyn Bullard (Parish Evangelist at Forbes), Sister Pat Free (Staff Officer) and the Rev. Graeme MacRobb (College Principal). Forty-five people participated from eleven parishes. The programme included Communication Training, consideration of the role of the Church and the use of young people in that task and an active introduction to a wide variety of resources for use in Youth Ministry.

THE CHURCH ARMY IN AUSTRALIA

P.O. Box 107, FRENCH'S FOREST, N.S.W., 2086

PATRONS: The Archbishops and Bishops of Australia.

EXECUTIVE BOARD: The Rev. Canon R.F. Gray (Chairman), Mr. R.H. Boyt, Mr. D. Coburn, the Rev. J.N. Falkingham, Miss P. Byron, the Rev. D.G. Livingstone, Mr. R. Manuell, Mr. K. Alexander, Mr. G. Seton, the Rev. K.R. Le'Huray, the Rev. J.R. Henderson, the Rev. B.J. Bevis, Mr. K. Llewellyn (Hon. Treasurer), the Right Rev. D.N. Shearman, the Ven. N.J. Eley, Mr. C.C. Crittle.

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FEDERAL SECRETARY: Captain R.L. Gwilt, C.A.

STAFF SISTER: Sister P.A. Free, C.A.

PRINCIPAL OF COLLEGE OF EVANGELISM: The Rev. G.L. MacRobb, Th.L., Dip.R.E., Dip.Min.

BOOKSHOPS: Tyrrell House, P.O. Box 784, Newcastle, N.S.W., 2300. Tel. 23160
95 Prince Street, Grafton, N.S.W., 2460. 104 Donnison Street, Gosford, N.S.W. 2250.

MANAGER OF BOOKSHOPS: Captain N.A.R. Payne, C.A.

THE WORLD WIDE CHURCH ARMY: The Church Army was founded in England in 1882, by Prebendary Wilson Carlile. It is a lay society of men and women Evangelists of the Anglican Communion. Other autonomous societies were founded in the U.S.A. in 1927, Canada 1928, Australia 1934, New Zealand 1935, Eastern Africa 1962, Jamaica 1969. Officers from some of these Societies are also at work in Germany, South America, South Africa, Belize, Cyprus, West Pakistan and Italy.